THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) India has consistently urged the US Administration and members of the Congress to use their influence with Pakistan, and available means under US laws, to deter Pakistan from pursuing the nuclear weapons option.

(b) The US Administration and some members of Congress have also expressed their concern over aspects of Pakistan's nuclear programme and the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia. The US Administration has viewed Pakistan's nuclear programme with its clearly non-peaceful aspects in a regional context. At the same time, the US has given Pakistan the benefit of a waiver from US non-proliferation laws. India finds this approach unacceptable.

US Aid to Pakistan

611. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has taken up with the U.S. the issue of 4 billion dollar aid to Pakistan which is likely to strengthen Pak effort to go nuclear; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The US Government has stated that its security assistance to Pakistan is a response to a perceived threat from Afghanistan and to Pakistan's defence modernisation needs and is not directed against India Government do not share this assessment.

Vacancies of Judges in Supreme Court and High Courts

612. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of vacancies of Judges of High Courts/Supreme Court as on the 31st October, 1987;

(b) the time since when these posts are lying vacant, and

(c) the steps taken to fill these vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As on 31-10-1987, there were 10 vacancies in the authorised strength of 26 Judges in the Supreme Court, and 50 vacancies in the total sanctioned strength of 442 Judges in various High Courts of the country.

(b) The vacancies in the Supreme Court arose on the following dates:—

No. of vacancies	Dates from which they have arisen
10	1-7-1987
	25-9-1987

Remaining 8 vacancies arose on 9-5-1986 when the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court was raised from 18 to 26 Judges by Parliamentary enactment.

The dates on which the 50 vacancies of Judges in the High Courts arose are given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below)

(c) Selection of Judges involves deliberation in consultation with the concerned constitutional authorities. Government is making all possible efforts to fill up the vacancies. This is however a continuous process.